which are not considered patentable, steps are taken to assess whether grant of patent can be challenged.

In order to protect our biodiversity and prevent bio-piracy, a legislation on biodiversity with the broad objectives of conservation, sustainable utilisation of biological diversity, and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of biological resources is being formulated by the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

FDI in road and port projects

682. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision regarding automatic approval of 100 per cent FDI in road and port projects:

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that most of the project proposals would still be subject to the vagaries of case-by-case clearance and routine opaqueness; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Government have permitted projects for "construction and maintenance of roads, highways, vehicular bridges, toll roads, vehicular tunnels, ports and harbours" for foreign equity participation upto 100% on the automatic route provided the total foreign equity in any such projects does not exceed Rs. 1500 crore.

Closure of Units

683. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of workers/employees rendered jobless as a result of closure of the Units and also due to V.R.S. introduced by the companies during the last five years;

(b) whether Government are aware that a few companies have resorted to closure only to divert their valuable land assets to the real estate market; and

(c) if so, what is the number of such units and Government's reaction in regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) According to information available, under the relevant provisions of the Industrial Disputes Act, a total number of 64,368 workers have been affected due to closure of units during the period 1994 to 1998. Under the voluntary retirement scheme of the NRF, 84,816 workers of Central Public Sector Units have benefited during the period 1993 to 1998.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Implementation of package for the North East

684. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a revised North-East Industrial package was announced by Government in December, 1997;

(b) whether it is a fact that most of the announcements made by Government in this regard have not yet been implemented;

(c) if so, what are the reasons for such a long delay; and

(d) by when all the decisions will be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) No, Sir. Most of the necessary notifications including extending transport subsidy scheme, grant

of Rs. 29 crores to North East Development Finance Corporation and operationalisation of the comprehensive insurance scheme for industrial units in North East have been notified. In the case of Income-tax for the industrial units in the North East, five year tax holiday has been announced. The exemption from excise duty is being processed by the Ministry of Finance.

Entry of multinationals into labour intensive sector

685. SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are encouraging multinationls to enter into labour intensive sector;

(b) what is the objective of encouraging multinationals to bring about unemployment;

(c) whether any study has been done of the impact that foreign multinationls will have on employment in the unoriganised sector;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether FIPB policies will result in making unemployed millions of tribal beedi workers; and

(f) if so, the reasons for such focus on the unorganised sector?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a), (c) and (e) No, Sir.

(b), (d) and (f) Do not arise.

Swadeshi Mela

686. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the names of Public Sector Undertakings who opened stalls in Swadeshi Mela recently organised in Delhi and the amount contributed by them;

(b) the rate at which they were given the stalls; and

(c) whether Government approved the rate for allotment of these stalls?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the House.

राष्ट्रीय नवीकरण निधि के लाभार्थी

687. श्रीमती सरोज दुबे: क्या उद्योग मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे:

(क) विगत तीन वर्षों के दौरान उन्नत तकनीक और उद्योगों के आधुनिकीकरण से प्रभावित कितने कर्मचारियों और श्रमिकों को राष्ट्रीय नवीकरण निधि द्वारा लाभान्वित किया गया है, राज्य-वार ब्यौरा दें;

(ख) राष्ट्रीय नवीकरण निधि द्वारा उन्हें क्या-क्या लाभ दिये गये हैं;

(ग) क्या राष्ट्रीय नवीकरण निधि उनके हितों की रक्षा करने में सफल रहा है;

(घ) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(ङ) यदि नहीं, तो उसके क्या कारण है?

उद्योग मंत्री (श्री सिकन्दर बख्त): (क) से (ङ) केन्द्रीय सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र उपक्रमों में स्वैच्छिक सेवा-निवृत्त योजना हेतु तथा परामर्श कामगारों को पुनः प्रशिक्षण देने, संगठित क्षेत्र के कामगारों का पुनः नियोजन किए जाने की योजना के लिये राष्ट्रीय नवीकरण निधि से वित्तीय सहायता उपलब्ध है। इस संबंध में उपलब्ध सूचना के अनुसार, 31.1.1999 की स्थिति के अनुसार राष्ट्रीय नवीकरण निधि सहायता से स्वैच्छिक सेवा निवृत्ति योजना के अन्तर्गत केन्द्रीय सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र उपक्रमों के 1,27,464 कामगारों को लाभान्वित किया गया है। परामर्श, पुनः प्रशिक्षण आदि देने की योजना के अन्तर्गत 31.1.1999 की स्थिति के अनुसार कुल 95070 कामगारों का सर्वेक्षण किया गया तथा 48,558 कामगारों को परामर्श दे दिया गया है। इसमें से 34,918 कामगारों को पुनः प्रशिक्षण दे दिया गया है तथा 11,024 कामगारों को पुनः नियोजित कर दिया गया है। इस बारे में राज्य-वार आंकड़े केन्द्रीय कृत रूप में नहीं रखे जाते हैं।